

What is claimed is:

1. A system for identifying potential parties to a transaction, comprising:
 - a plurality of terminals enabling users to enter transaction data into the system,
 - a first subset of the users forming a part of at least one first exchange, with the users of each first exchange executing transactions within the first exchange to balance supply and demand within the first exchange, wherein a difference between the supply and demand within the first exchange defines a first aggregate supply/demand imbalance of the first exchange,
 - a second subset of the users different from the first subset of the users and forming a part of a second exchange, with a user of the second subset of the users having at least one of an excess supply and an excess demand to define a second individual supply/demand imbalance of the respective user,
 - a communication network having a server and linking with the server the terminals of at least one of the first exchanges and the second subset of users, the server polling the terminals to obtain the first aggregate and second individual supply/demand imbalances, and
 - the server applying at least one business rule to match the first aggregate and second individual supply/demand imbalances while preventing the first and second subset of users from obtaining the identity of the respective other users,
- 20 thereby identifying potential parties to a transaction.

2. The system according to claim 1, wherein the business rule is selected from the group consisting of part number, part type, part count, characteristic attributes of a party on the other side of the transaction, customizable time periods, and internal supply/demand of the first and second exchanges.
- 5 3. The system according to claim 2, wherein the characteristic attributes of a party are selected from the group consisting of geographic location of the party, name of the party, manufacturing capacity of the party and creditworthiness of the party.
4. The system according to claim 1, wherein the server includes a relational database capable of providing a common view of the transaction data to the users.
- 10 5. The system according to claim 1, further including encryption means to provide anonymity and authenticity of the users.
6. The system according to claim 4, wherein the relational database further includes a registry of the private exchanges and the users of the second subset.
- 15 7. The system according to claim 4, wherein the relational database further includes cross-references of components of interest to the parties.
8. The system according to claim 1, wherein the subset of the remote terminals forming a part of the at least one first exchange anonymously reports to the server transaction data between terminals of the subset of remote terminals of the first exchange.
- 20 9. A computer program residing on a computer-readable medium for identifying and matching potential parties to a transaction according to a plurality of business rules, comprising instructions for causing a computer to:

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acquire from at least one first exchange having a plurality of users, the users forming a first set of users and executing transactions within the first exchange to balance supply and demand within the first exchange, a first aggregate supply/demand imbalance of the at least one first exchange, with the first aggregate supply/demand imbalance representing a difference in the supply and demand between the users within the first exchange;

acquire from a user being part of a second set of users different from the first set of users a second individual supply/demand imbalance of the respective user of the second set of users; and

compare and attempt to match - based on the business rules and while preventing the users from the first and second subset of users from obtaining the identity of the respective other users - the first aggregate and second individual supply/demand imbalances between the at least one first exchange and the second set of users, respectively,

thereby reducing an imbalance in a supply/demand between the parties.

10. A computer-implemented transaction method to generate a match between supply and demand within boundaries established by business rules, the method comprising:

first users forming a part of at least one first exchange and providing first transaction data,

20 the at least one first exchange forming from the first transaction data aggregate transaction data defining a first aggregate supply/demand imbalance of the at least one first exchange,

second users forming a part of a second exchange, a second user providing second transaction data which define a second individual supply/demand imbalance of the respective second user,

comparing the first and second supply/demand imbalances and - based on the business rules and while preventing the first and second users from obtaining the identity of the respective other users - matching the at least one first exchange and the second users of the second exchange based on the first and second supply/demand imbalances, thereby reducing an imbalance in a supply/demand between the at least one first exchange and the second users.

- 10 11. The transaction method according to claim 10, wherein the business rules are selected from the group consisting of part number, part type, part count, characteristic attributes of a party on the other side of the transaction, customizable time periods, and internal supply/demand of the public and private exchanges.
- 15 12. The transaction method according to claim 11, wherein the characteristic attributes of a party are selected from the group consisting of geographic location of the party, name of the party, manufacturing capacity of the party and creditworthiness of the party.
13. The transaction method according to claim 10, wherein the first and second users are presented with a common representation of the transaction data.
- 20 14. A web site for matching supply and demand between parties to a transaction, with a first subset of the parties comprising a plurality of parties and forming a part of at least one first exchange, said first exchange providing first aggregate transaction data, and at least some of the remaining parties forming a part of a second exchange, with the parties of the

second exchange providing second individual transaction data, the web site comprising:

a computer;

a database accessible by said computer;

5 a web page for receiving the first aggregate and second individual transaction data from the parties;

a program executing on said computer for comparing the received first aggregate transaction data and the second individual transaction data and - based on the business rules residing in the database and while preventing the first and second users from obtaining the identity of the respective other users - matching the at least one first exchange and the parties of the second exchange based on the first and second supply/demand imbalances,

thereby reducing an imbalance in a supply/demand between the at least one first exchange and the parties of the second exchange.

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15. The web site according to claim 14, wherein the business rules are selected from the group consisting of part number, part type, part count, characteristic attributes of a party on the other side of the transaction, customizable time periods, and internal supply/demand of the first and second exchanges.
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16. The web site according to claim 15, wherein the characteristic attributes of a party are selected from the group consisting of geographic location of the party, name of the party, manufacturing capacity of the party and creditworthiness of the party.
17. The web site according to claim 14, wherein the database is a relational database which provides a common view of the data to the parties.

18. The web site according to claim 17, wherein the web page is produced using an XML protocol.
19. The web site according to claim 14, further including encryption means to provide anonymity and authenticity of the parties.
- 5 20. The web site according to claim 17, wherein the database further includes a registry of the first exchanges and the parties of the second exchange.
21. The web site according to claim 15, wherein the relational database further includes cross-references of components of interest to the parties.
22. The web site according to claim 14, wherein the parties of the first subset of the parties report the transaction data between the parties of the first subset of the parties.

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